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The Battle at Matewan

Another bloody clash has been added to the already long list of affrays between American coal miners and the scum of this vicious industrial system, the hordes of private detectives which infest every locality when the workers attempt to better their conditions.

Matewan, a mining hamlet among the West Virginia mountains is the scene. Responsive to their economic needs, the miners had organized themselves into a labor union for better protection against the excess exploitation to which they were subjected thru the greed of their employers, the Coal Barons.

The employers immediately dispatched a contingent of their private army armed to the teeth with revolvers and Winchesters to make war upon the new union. This private army proceeded to ferret out the organizers and active members of the union and to evict them and their families from the properties of the mining company. Like most mining centers, Matewan is owned chiefly by the coal companies.

Having completed their work, the detectives waited at the station for their train to depart and there placed the chief of police under arrest. Sentiment against the actions of the detectives was running high in the village, and, like all American small towns, the arrival of a train being an event of importance, a goodly assembly of residents were on hand to witness it. Among these was the Mayor who interceded when he saw the chief of police arrested. He was immediately killed outright. His murderer being as quickly despatched by the police chief. In a moment a dozen or more men, chiefly private detectives lay dead and wounded on the spot. State troops have since patrolled the few dingy streets of this tiny centre of industry and the class struggle.

Thus, in a few days, has again been run the whole gamut of how many industrial battles? Beginning in the inhumanity and greed of conscienceless exploiters, which in turn, drives the workers into a league for defense, which, instead of being met in a spirit of tolerance, becomes an object of destruction by the exploiters, cost what it may. With an elemental viciousness equalled only by the power of wealth and the capitalist made laws, the destruction of the workers' union is executed. The class struggle bares its fangs and stamps its iron hoofs. Force, naked and weltering in blood amid the rattle of death volleys ensues. And chances are, those who have the most guns and use them first prevail, for power comes thru the operation of physical force now, as when the world was young and man fought man for the mastery of his hunting grounds.

A distressing scene certainly. But an excellent likeness in miniature of an economic system wherein the lives and welfare of the workers are subjected to the whim and desire of the class of robbers who own and operate for individual profit the industries of the nation. Such examples as Matewan teach the workers the innate criminality of such a system. Only workers' control of the mining industry with the title of ownership residing in a workers' government can right this criminal wrong. Let the workers prepare to own as well as operate the mines. By the workers, for the workers thru workers' control. All power to the workers!

Buffers for Bolshevism

Since the counter revolution in Russia has been so decisively conquered and the hopes of world capitalism for the fall of Bolshevism have gone glimmering, it has placed much hope upon Germany and Poland as buffer states to stop the spread of bolshevism to the proletariat of Europe and the world. Herein was recognition of the power of bolshevik ideas if granted half a chance at operation. These hopes now seem to be on the verge of collapse.

Upon Poland especially, was reposed much confidence along this line. With a strong capitalistic state between Russia and Germany, the exploitation of Germany by the Allies might continue to the full satisfaction and greed of the victorious democracies, while at the same time, the power of Russia would cease at the Polish frontiers. Recently, a great deal of sympathy for the success of the Polish advance against the Red Army was manifest in the daily press. For a week past it has subsided and little news concerning activities from that section have made their appearance. But the past few days there has appeared news of Polish defeats of a very extensive character, indicating that the tide has turned and the counter advance of the Reds may bring to Russia as momentous victories over Polish aggression as over the counter revolutionists. Poland, as a buffer state stands every chance to collapse.

In Germany there are indications that another revolutionary upheaval is imminent. Recent provincial elections show that the strength of the Majority Socialists in the government is declining rapidly, this strength being about evenly divided between the reactionaries and the Revolutionists. Thus is the inevitable clash of the two social classes seen to be rapidly approaching. A Plain Dealer editorial of recent date indicates the attitude of the capitalistic minded upon this approaching crisis. Says the Plain Dealer:

If the Majority Socialists are to be eliminated the extremists will directly face each other, and it is difficult to see how a disastrous conflict can be avoided. Though no one is poor enough to do reverence to the men who have been ruling Germany it may well be hoped that their rule will continue. In such a field of evils as is today presented in Germany the middle-class Socialists appear almost good and their choice is easy.

Yes, a pseudo, socialism is perfectly satisfactory to capitalism. As between a choice of clear cut workers' control with the elimination of the capitalist class and a reformistic regime of half way socialization, the latter is undoubtedly to its liking, and in the coming crisis in Germany the Allies may be expected to support the latter.

The weakness of reform socialism is becoming emphatically evident in Germany. So far, it has failed utterly. How much longer it may be tolerated by the German people is a question which the coming elections will shed much light upon. There is a lesson in the German situation which the moderate socialists of the United States may well take to heart. While they are attempting to establish in this country a middle-of-the road socialism, the same thing in the land where it has been tried out by practical application is fail-

EDITORIAL & PARTY NEWS PAGE

Proletarian Science History

An economic interpretation of history especially arranged for use as a text-book for study classes, or for home study.

By W. E. REYNOLDS.
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OUTLINE FOR LOWER CIVILIZATION.

Beginning Use of the phonetic alphabet. Solonic Law.
Tools and Weapons Iron, steel and precious metals used. Gunpowder, firearms, compass. Evolution of primitive machinery such as water-wheel.
Transportation On land, wheeled vehicles and animals. On water, improved sailing vessels. Biremes and triremes.
Subsistence Similar to upper barbarism.
Shelter Buildings of stone, brick and hand-sawed plank-ing.
Clothing Hand woven fabrics of wool, cotton, flax and silk.
Environment All climates except frigid. Home the center of industry. Extension of agriculture and mining.
Organization Work for slaves, serfs and wage-earners. Ease, luxury and learning for the masters.
Arts and Institutions Monarchical and Imperial. Chattel slavery, serf-dom and wage-slavery. Militarism. Monogamic marriage. Combined church and state. Primitive labor unions.
Duration Primitive factory. Wages system. Printing. Much less than upper barbarism. About four thousand years.

CHAPTER X.

LOWER CIVILIZATION.

Lower or hand-tool age.

The lower age of civilization begins with the appearance of the phonetic alphabet,—the alphabet evolved out of hieroglyphics used by the Babylonians and Hittites as early as two thousand years B. C. It was further developed and made more practical by the Phoenicians in their commercial relations with other nations. The alphabet was evolved in response to commercial necessity. It was the logical outgrowth of the commercial demand for accurate means of communication and a record of business transactions. The Phoenicians were one of the first great maritime powers of the world and therefore in the greatest need of written communications.**)

The tools in general were but an evolution of those used in upper barbarism and met the requirements of the industrial needs of that age. It was during this age that the water wheel as a source of power was first developed, by the Greeks in the time of Hesiod. Gunpowder made its appearance about the year 600 A. D. in China but was suppressed on account of its great destructivity. It was invented in Europe about two hundred years later. The fire arm was the logical result of the invention of gunpowder. This weapon has played a prominent part in the making of history.

Steel was developed to a high degree of perfection in Damascus, due to the liberation of slaves under the Solonic Law. In pre-Solonic days the slave having no hope in the world did not mingle his thought with his labor, with the result that industry did not keep pace with the military needs of the master in repelling barbarian invasion. It was agreed among the rulers of the primitive empires of Italy, Greece, Rome and Egypt, that higher technical skill in the industrial arts was needed. It was Solon who suggested the idea of liberating a certain portion of the slaves and giving them limited privileges based upon the degree of perfection in the industrial arts attained by them.***)

Out of the Solonic Law evolved the primitive labor union, that became the back-bone of Ancient Civilization. Damascus steel was a direct product of the unions operating under the Solonic Law.****)

It is customary with writers on the economic interpretation of history to place the beginning of civilization at the time of the appearance of the alphabet. Civilization really began with the inauguration of the Solonic Law. It is this law that gave to the masters a form in which they could use their economic power to coerce not only the physical but also the mental resources of their slaves. Physical violence can drive a slave to his task but it required another form to make him think about the improvement of his task. This was found in the system of rewards and immunities under the Solonic Law.

Transportation in lower civilization was a slight improvement over that of upper barbarism, especially in water transportation. The biremes and triremes now supplanted the former slave-propelled galleys, the only difference being in the number of slaves and oars.

The subsistence, shelter and clothing of lower civilization were practically the same as in the age of upper barbarism. There were a few additional fabrics and conveniences due to the further development of the tools of production.

Aryan man, during the age of lower civilization, extended his range from the Himalayas to Iceland, from

ling to pieces. Meanwhile, the Soviet government of Russia, established thru the proletarian dictatorship eliminating at once the bourgeoisie, grows stronger with each rising day. Yet, the Socialist Party at its recent national convention repudiated the principle of proletarian dictatorship as a tactic of the revolution. Since the ascendancy of the moderate socialists to power in Germany, civil war has been rife. Thousands of workers have fallen in the clashes with Noske's guards. But the final conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie must and will arrive for all that.

Shall American socialists attempt that which is already proven a failure? Shall the agony and suffering of revolution be prolonged by dilly-dallying with half-way measures or shall the power of the workers be made supreme at once by denying the capitalist class any power whatever? To answer these questions in the negative is to build upon quicksand and to drain away in agony and suffering the blood of countless thousands of workers.

Let proletarian successes elsewhere teach us the tactics which entail the least suffering. Replace the dictatorship of the exploiting class with that of the useful producers during the transition from capitalism to Communism.

his cities and trading centers and bought and trafficked Scandinavia to Spain. Wherever he went he established bartered and fought with his neighbors. Robbery and piracy were predominant amongst his early occupations.

Chattel slavery, which was a form of slavery based upon ownership of the person, gradually gave way to the institution of serfdom, which was a form of slavery based upon ownership of the land. Under this form of slavery the serf was sold with the land. He was a part of a Feudal Estate, having the legal status of real estate.

The two classes of society in this age were known as the Patricians and Plebeians. These classes were again subdivided: Patricians into warriors and priests and Plebeians into freeman and slaves. In each of these classes there were again degrees and castes, such as the ranks of soldiers, the orders of priests, the various crafts of the artisans. The serf was an agricultural slave with but little skill.

The life of the upper class during this age as during all others, since the division of society into classes, was a life of luxury, ease and arrogance. Feudalism was not the condition of the entire age of lower civilization, but grew out of the suppression of the Solonic Unions in the Roman Empire which made the Feudal Estate the center of industry. Feudalism was supreme during the dark ages for the reason that after the suppression of the Solonic Unions skill was not encouraged.

During the dark ages the power of the church was supreme. Church and state were one and inseparable, and made relentless war on all forms of intellectual activity, particularly genius of an investigative or inventive turn.

Out of the guild system of the lower age of civilization evolved the primitive factory which gave rise to the apprentice and wages system. The art of printing, like the alphabet itself, was made necessary by the pressure of the larger volume of commerce. The same causes also produced the compass.

The duration of the age of lower civilization was much less than upper barbarism. It began about 2000 B. C., and ended with the discovery of steam power in the eighteenth century.

*** Notice here the beginning of the use of chronological dates. Prior to written records, exact dates were an impossibility.

*** As early as 1000 B. C. the Phoenicians had long since given up the use of the inconvenient clay tablet of Babylonia, and were importing great quantities of papyrus paper from Egypt. They had devised their own system of twenty two signs for writing their own language. There were no signs for vowels or syllables. The Phoenicians were the first people to devise a system of writing containing nothing but alphabetic signs; that is true letters.

The Phoenicians arranged their new letters in a convenient order so that the whole twenty two might form a fixed list easily learned. Such a list could not be learned without giving to each letter a name. They called the first letter of the alphabet, ox, because the Phoenician word for ox, that is, aleph, began with the first letter. The second began with the second letter, and so on. This was not unlike our old primers where our parents learned to say: "A is for 'axe', B is for letter, they called, house because both, the Phoenician word for house 'bed' etc. When the children of the Phoenician merchants learned their letters and were called upon to repeat the alphabet, they therefore began: "aleph, beth," etc, as if our children were to say: "axe, bed," etc., instead of "A, B," etc.

The word alphabet itself confirms the history that the Phoenicians had the alphabet first, the Greeks borrowing the Phoenician names for the letters, the alphabet(a) having passed from the Greeks to the Latins and from them to us.

*** The heads of the Solonic Unions were elected on account of their master craftsmanship. They were called lords on account of their executive ability and masters on account of their ability as craftsmen. It was not an infrequent occurrence for one of these lords to offer themselves as a substitute or sacrifice in cases where their constituents were supposed to have merited death or re-enslavement for offenses involving a violation of the Solonic Law.

Here was the origin of The Christian concept of the Atonement. Christ the Lord and Master, volunteering himself as a sacrifice, for the sins of his followers. It is but the expression, in a religious form, of an ancient practice.

*** The reader is referred to the first volume of Ancient Lowly by C. Osborne Ward for a further amplification of the Solonic Law.

QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER TEN.

Lower Civilization.

1. What is a phonetic alphabet?
2. Explain the origin of the phonetic alphabet.
3. What was the Solonic Law?
4. Explain the origin of the primitive labor union.
5. Name the economic reasons for the advent of the Solonic Law.
6. What is a bireme? Trireme?
7. Name the predominant occupations of the Aryan man of this age.
8. What was chattel slavery?
9. What was serfdom?
10. Explain the gradations of the various classes in society at this time.
11. Explain the origin of Feudalism.
12. What was Feudalism?
13. What was the basis of industry under Feudalism?
14. What is meant by the term, "dark ages"?
15. What was the reason for the rise of Feudalism?
16. What was the guild system?
17. Why was inventive and investigative genius suppressed during the dark ages?
18. What was the economic reason for the invention of the art of printing?
19. Why was the compass invented?
20. What was the duration of the age of lower civilization?

(Continued next week)

LONDON—"Either a reactionary Germany will join the Allies, including Japan, in an attempt to exploit Russia's natural resources without recognizing the Soviet Government, or a democratic Germany will form an alliance with the Russian people"—this is the prediction of Brigadier-General C. B. Thompson, a member of Sir Douglas Haig's staff, as to what will happen in case the present methods of the Supreme Council continue.

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